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Leurognathus marmorata Moore in Virginia

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On the morning of August 3, 1955, at about 12:30 A.M., we collected an adult female of *Leurognathus marmorata* in a small creek on the northwest side of Whitetop Mountain, Smyth County, Virginia. Returning from a night trip to Mount Rogers, we had paused to check the stream for *Gyrinophilus*, and within ten minutes had bagged the leurognath and seen another which avoided capture.

The specimen at hand measures 115 mm. in total length, and 64 mm. from tip of snout to posterior angle of vent. In life it was light brown dorsally, with a conspicuous yellowish marbling, the yellow color being most intense on each side of the back with occasional obscure transverse bands. The impression in dorsal aspect is of a rather clay-colored salamander with middorsal isolated blackish spots and patches. The sides were mottled yellowish and gray, with a midlateral row of indistinct white spots, rather more pronounced on the tail. The venter was uniformly bluish-gray, shading into almost white under the head and at the soles of the feet. The color pattern was distinctive enough that the two individuals were immediately recognized as *Leurognathus* even before capture, despite being the first we have seen in the field. Both were found in flowing water, one being hidden, except for head and shoulders, under a small flat stone submerged to a depth of about three inches.

Upon dissection, the specimen was found to contain 16 large eggs on each side. Due to their closely packed condition, it was difficult to obtain precise measurements, but each is slightly over 2 mm. in diameter. Unfortunately, the stomach contained no articles of food.

This collection, although adding another species to the known herpetological fauna of Virginia, does not constitute a particularly great range extension, as the species has been found at a number of localities about 40 miles to the southeast. Nor is the distribution extended into a

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different physiographic region, since the species has been taken in the Iron Mountains further to the south (at Roan Mountain, Tennessee) .

However, the incident is noteworthy in that it again emphasizes the point that the details of salamander distribution in the Southern Appalachians are far from being as well known as some authors have indicated. For instance, a recent paper by Pope and Hairston (1947) dealt with the distribution of *Leurognathus* in some detail. These workers stated that *L. marmorata* probably did not occur in the Whitetop region, for the reason that it had not been found there despite "... extensive collecting by various experienced herpetologists." Granting this statement to be true, what can be said of the discovery of two large adults within ten minutes of the most cursory search in a stream which has been crossed by every collector who has been to Whitetop Mountain ?

It seems obvious that the lure of spruce-forest salamanders must make stream collecting appear rather sordid. This preoccupation with high elevations has resulted in the depletion of populations at several well-known and readily accessible localities, but has not contributed a great deal to our knowledge of distributional phenomena in salamanders.

The stream in which we collected is named Big Branch on the Mount Rogers quadrangle (1939 edition) of the U. S. Geological Survey. It is crossed by County Route 600, about a mile southeast of the Konnarock Girl's School, at an elevation of 3420 feet. It is in no way remarkable, nor different from numerous other streams in the region, and we venture to predict that future collecting will show *Leurognathus* to be actually widespread in the Iron Mountain country of Washington, Smyth, and Grayson counties, where more than 200 square miles lie above the 3000 foot contour.

The specimen from Whitetop has been presented to the Chicago Academy of Sciences (CA 17197) . It appears to be referable to the typical subspecies, *L. m. marmorata* Moore, although the accumulation of a series may demonstrate subspecific differences in the Virginia population.

Literature Cited

Pope, Clifford H., and Nelson G. Hairston

- 1947 The distribution of *Leurognathus*, a southern Appalachian genus of salamanders. *Fieldiana; Zoology*, vol. 31, no. 20, p. 155-162, fig. 28, 29.